

To you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ... to suffer. Phil. 1 : 29 (R.V.)

The child of God is often called to suffer, because nothing will convince onlookers of the reality and power of true religion as suffering will do, when it is borne with Christian resignation and fortitude. And how great the compensations are!

He can keep in such perfect peace. He can make lonely times, when no one is near the couch, to be so full of sweet fellowship and communion. He can put such strong, soft hands under the tired limbs, resting them. He can give refreshment to the spirit when the body is deprived of sleep.

Everyone cannot be trusted with suffering. All could not stand the fiery ordeal. They would speak rashly and complainingly. So the Master has to select with careful scrutiny the branches which can stand the knife; the jewels which can bear the wheel. It is given to some to preach, to others to work, but to others to suffer. Accept it as a gift from his hand. Look up and take each throb of pain, each hour of agony, as his gift. Dare to thank Him for it. Look inside the envelope of pain for the message it enfolds. It is a rough packing-case, but there is treasure in it.

And can you not minister to other sufferers ? Can you not dictate letters of comfort, or pray for them, or devise little alleviations and surprises for those who have not what you have? Suffering is on Christ's behalf; it must, then, be intended as part of that great ministry for the world in which He, with his saints, is engaged. There is a sense in which all suffering, borne in the spirit of Calvary, helps men, not in the way of atonement or propitiation, of course, but by the exhibition of the power of God's grace in the sufferer.

因為你們蒙恩，... 得以 ... 為他受苦。 腓一29

神的兒女常常蒙召來受苦，因為沒有什麼，像基督徒在苦難中順服且堅毅不拔，所顯出他們信仰的真實和能力，更折服旁觀的人。他們的回報是何等大啊！

他可以持守在完全的平安裡。縱然無人在床榻旁，他依然可以把孤單的時間，變成充滿甜蜜的交通。他可以把強壯而又溫柔的手放在疲倦的四肢下，來使它們休息。在身體不得睡時，他靈裡仍得舒暢。

不是每個人都可以受託付受苦。不是所有的人都能在火的試煉裡站立。人會說輕率和抱怨的話語。所以主人必須仔細審查，哪些枝子能夠承受修剪的刀子；哪些寶石可以忍受磨輪。神給某些人恩賜傳道，又給另一些人恩賜去作工，但給另外的人恩賜受苦。你要把苦難當作禮物，從祂的手領受。你要向神仰望，把每一次疼痛的悸動，每小時的痛苦，當成祂的恩賜。大膽地為此感謝祂。你要看看痛苦的信封裡面所包著的信息。雖然盒子粗糙，裡面卻藏著珍寶。

你無法去服事其他受苦的人嗎？你無法口授安慰信，或者無法為他們禱告，或者也不能想出微小的緩解和驚喜，給那些沒有你所擁有的人嗎？受苦是為基督的緣故；所以受苦必定會成為祂與祂的聖徒為世人從事的偉大事奉的一部分。所有在加略山[註]的靈裡所忍受的苦楚，裡頭有一種意義叫人得幫助，這當然不是用贖罪獻祭的方式，而是藉著在受苦之人身上彰顯神恩典的能力。

[註] 加略山：耶穌釘十字架的地方。該詞為音譯。中文和合本意譯作「髑髏地」（路廿三33）。

He was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. Phil. 2: 26

Some have identified Epaphroditus here with Epaphras in the Epistle to the Colossians. Here he is represented as sorrowful, even to agony, because his friends had heard of his illness, and he would have wished that no one should be burdened on his account. But in the other epistle he is represented as always striving for the saints in prayer.

It is very beautiful to discover his unwillingness to have his sickness published. When we are in trouble it is best not to speak much of it, save to God. "Only inexperienced sufferers are voluble; those familiar with the secrets of anguish are silent." Let us anoint the head, and wash the face, that we may not appear unto men to fast, but to the Father who is in secret; and our Father who seeth in secret will Himself reward openly. The Comforter will draw near, will whisper his own consolations, and amid much sorrow we shall be calm and strong.

But with Epaphras there was probably another thought. He knew that the Philippians were bearing a very heavy load of sorrow. It was a hard and difficult fight for them, as for him. And with much generosity he was most unwilling that the news of his illness should add a feather-weight to their grief.

This eagerness to conceal pain, lest it should add sorrow to those who already have almost as much as they can bear, is very characteristic of noble souls. And we may quote here Robert Hall's words, on recovering from a keen paroxysm of anguish: "I have not complained, have I, sir? No, and I will not complain." How much of God's strength and comfort we miss in our incessant endeavour to secure the support which notoriety for pain and privation may bring from our fellows!

他 ... 極其難過，因為你們聽見他病了。 腓二26

有些人認為這裡的以巴弗提和歌羅西書裡的以巴弗(西四12)是同一人。他在這裡被描述為悲傷，甚至到極度痛苦，因為他的朋友們聽見他病了，而他並不希望任何人因他背負重擔。在歌羅西書裡，他被描述為竭力為聖徒禱告的人。

發現他不情願公開他的病是件很美的事。當我們處在困境中，最好不要太提及它，留著說給神聽。「只有沒經驗的受苦者才會說個不停；而熟諳痛苦奧秘的人是沉默的。」讓我們梳頭洗臉，不叫人看出我們禁食來，只叫暗中的父看見；我們的父在暗中察看，必然在明處報答(太六17)。保惠師(聖靈)必靠近，微聲道出祂的安慰，我們就會在悲傷中得到平靜和剛強。

然而對以巴弗來說，也許還有別的想法。他知道腓立比人正在承受很沉重的憂愁。這對他們來說是一個很艱難的爭戰，如同對以巴弗一樣。因著寬大，十分不情願他生病的消息加重一點腓立比人的悲傷。

渴望隱藏痛苦，以免給那幾乎已經承受夠多的人增添憂愁，這是尊貴之人的特點。也許我們可以在這裡引用侯饒伯[註]的話，在從一次疼痛的劇烈發作裡恢復時，他說：「我不曾抱怨過，是嗎，先生？不曾，而且以後也不會抱怨。」在我們不斷爭取人的扶持時，我們將失去神何等多的力量與安慰，同時也可能因著痛苦與缺乏，從同伴中得到惡名。

[註] 侯饒伯Robert Hall, 1764-1831, 英國浸信會傳道人，生前曾因腎結石極受痛苦煎熬。]

The working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself. Phil. 3 : 21 (R.V.)

What cannot He do? From the dust of mother Earth He was able to build up man in the image of God, in the first creation; and from the dust to which death shall again reduce us He will build up again our bodies in the likeness of his resurrection body. The formless clay shall be obliged to yield to his voice, his touch; and if He can do this, what can He not do?

There may be sins within your heart that have long resisted control. Do with them as you will, they still defy you. So long have they been entrenched within the citadel of your soul that, like the Jebusites in the days of David, they laugh you to scorn. But if you will hand over the conflict to Jesus, He will subdue them; He will bring them under his strong, subjecting hand. Be of good cheer. What you cannot do, He can. Whenever the old temptation arises, directly you are aware of it, lift your heart instantly to Jesus, and reckon on Him to cope with it in your behalf. The Lord will fight for you, whilst you shall hold your peace.

So with other difficulties in your life. The raising of a noble nature and character within you; the calling of souls, by your voice, from the death of sin to a life of righteousness; the bringing forth of a fair and well-ordered work from one which seems mere chaos and ruin--all such things are within the scope of this wonderful text. They must be easy to Him who from the dust of death can raise a body ethereal enough to be the home and vehicle of the new celestial life, which shall unfold into perfect beauty in his presence. Repeat the words until the rhythm charms away your doubts, "He is able to subject all things unto Himself."

他要按著那能叫萬有歸服自己的大能。 腓三21

有什麼是祂不能作的？在起初的創造中，祂能從大地的塵土，照著神的形像造人；並且從人死後所化成的塵土，祂再照著祂復活身體的樣式建造我們的身體。那無定形的泥土不得不聽從祂的聲音，順從祂的觸摸；如果祂能這樣作，還有什麼祂不能作的呢？

在你心裡可能有許多罪長久以來不受管制。你要照你所願的處理這些罪，這些罪仍然藐視你。它們已在你心中的堡壘裡，根深蒂固如此之久，就如大衛時代的耶布斯人一樣(撒下五6)，它們譏笑你。但是假如你將這爭戰交給耶穌，祂必戰勝這些罪；使它們臣服在祂強壯的手下。歡欣吧！你所不能的，祂能！無論何時那個熟悉的試探出現，你會立刻意識到它，你要立即向著耶穌舉起你的心，仰賴祂為你對付試探。主必為你爭戰，而你只要保持靜默。

你生命裡的其他難處也是如此。在你裡面尊貴性情和品格的產生；用你的聲音呼喚人，離開罪的死亡，來到義的生命；從原本完全混亂衰敗中現出美麗有序的工作——這一切事都包含在這節奇妙經文的範圍之內。這些事對祂來說必定輕而易舉，祂能從死亡的塵土裡興起屬天的身體，成為新的屬天生命的居所，這新的屬天生命要在祂面前展現完全的美麗。你當複述這些話，直到這韻律驅走你的懷疑，「祂能叫萬有歸服自己。」

In nothing be anxious. Phil. 4:6 (R.V.)

Black care! It has always been among men, and perhaps more so to-day than ever, when the pressure of life is heavier and the constraint of circumstances more imperious. Are there not hours in which the clouds gather densely over the Ark of God, and the stoutest hearts tremble? Is it easy for even the Christian soul to look on a family of little ones, sleeping soundly, and know that they will certainly awake hungry for food, of which the cupboard is bare, and have no tinge of anxiety?

It is at such times that the apostle bids us pray. "Make your requests known unto God." We have not to agonize before Him, as though, like the priests of Baal, who cried and cut themselves, we shall move Him by our anguish. Calmly, quietly, simply, make your requests known. Take your burden into his presence and lay it down there. He is your Father. He who made the body, and gave it you, will see to the supply of its needs. Your health, your children, the condition of his Church, are dear to Him who notices a falling sparrow, and by whom the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

We shall not escape life's discipline. We may expect to abound here, and to be abased there. But amid all, Peace, God's white-winged sentinel-angel, shall come down to keep the heart with its affections, the mind with its thoughts. Worry, unrest, anxiety will stand without, as the noise of the street breaks in vain on the double windows of the city counting-house, whilst the child of God learns humbly and patiently the lesson of his Father's love. Careful for nothing; prayerful and thankful in everything.

應當一無掛慮。 腓四6

黑色憂慮！憂慮常在人群當中，現今生活壓力加重，環境束縛更緊迫，也許憂慮比往日更多。有時豈不是雲彩厚厚地籠罩在神的約櫃之上，連最勇敢之人的心也顫抖嗎？即使是基督徒，看到家裡一群熟睡的小孩，知道他們一定會因為饑餓醒來，而櫥櫃裡是空的，卻一點不著急，這容易嗎？

就是在這種情形下，這位使徒吩咐我們來禱告。「將你們所要的告訴神。」我們並不必在祂面前掙扎，像巴力的祭司那樣哭叫，並割傷自己(王上十八28)，想要用我們的痛苦打動祂。你只要平靜泰然，簡單陳明你的請求。將你的重擔帶到祂面前，並且卸在那裡。祂是你的父。祂造了身體，將身體賜給你，就必定負責供應你身體的需要。你的健康，你的孩子，祂教會的情形，都是祂所看重的。祂留意一隻掉落的麻雀，你的每一根頭髮祂也都數過了。

我們不應該逃避人生的鍛練。我們可以期待在這裡豐富，在那裡降卑。但在這一切之中，平安，神的白翼守護天使，必下來用愛保守你的心，以他的意念保守你的心思。憂慮，不安，焦慮都要站到外面，就如街道上的吵鬧，無法穿透市政會計室的雙層玻璃一樣，同時神的兒女也謙卑耐性地學習父神愛的功課。應當一無掛慮，凡事禱告，凡事謝恩。